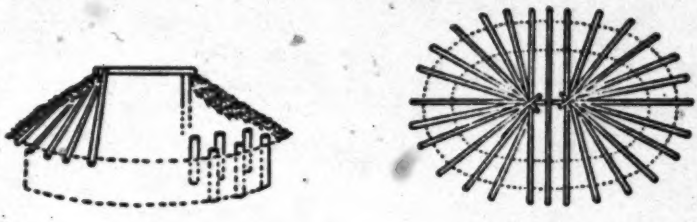
1:Nimuendajú E-5 (1941-1942) 1952
SQ20 Tucuna SQ20

II. HABITATION.

[591] [592] [777] The original Tukuna habitation was a large, isolated, communal dwelling, *maloca*, occupied by more than one family. All settlements made up of a number of houses together, like Tabatinga, São José do Javary, and Caldeirão, owe their origin to Neobrazilian initiative and were so contrary to tribal custom that the complaint was always heard that the Tukuna did not want to be herded together but would spread out again through the jungle.

[611] [591] I have often been told by the Indians themselves that in such or such a place there was once a great maloca of this or that clan. I do not know how to interpret this statement, for though the clans of the Tukuna are patrilineal, the family is more matrilocal than patrilocal, so that only in very special circumstances would all the men of one maloca belong to the same clan. However, the clan të'ma (Burity)—if, as tradition says, its members once spoke a language different from that of the other clans—might have been collectively localized.



a *b*

Fig. 1. Maloca or communal dwelling. *a*. Sketch showing roof and interior construction. *b*. Plan of rafters.

Houses

These houses were apparently circular; actually, however, there was always a small, rectangular central section, with a semicircular roof bay at each end (fig. 1). The rafters of this rectangular section, which formerly was only some two or three meters long, rested on a short ridgepole supported by pillars or posts. At each end, a little below the ridgepole and in the angles formed by the two outer pairs of rafters, there was a small horizontal crossbeam fastened to the rafters, and upon this rested the rafters of the roof bay (fig. 1, *b*).

Two series of vertical supports divided the interior into two concentric parts, the inner series—at least, the highest and strongest—being of *acapú* wood. The [824] house was covered with *caranã* thatching, the stems being intertwined and attached to a long lath of *paxiubã*[1] wood. The tips of the leaves were split and were also intertwined. The laths with the thatching attached were tied horizontally on the rafters with strips of the inner bark. For the first three or four years, at least, this covering was an absolutely impermeable protection from the tropical rains.

The walls, more or less the height of a man, were made of small poles of paxiuba wood, or of the same material as the roof. In a few houses the interstices were filled

[1] An exceedingly tough Amazonian palm (*Socratea exorrhiza*), the roots of which are so thorny that they are used to scrape manioc roots.

VII. SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Clans

The tribe is divided into some thirty clans, grouped into moieties, whose names I could never discover; I shall therefore refer to them here simply as A and B. The Tukuna language has only one word, kja', for both tribe and clan. In Brazil, moiety A has fifteen clans, moiety B twenty-one. It is possible that in Colombia and Peru there are Tukuna clans that are not represented in Brazil. Descent is patrilineal. Members of different clans but of the same moiety deal with one another reciprocally as ma'i^{n}o, "brother" (vocative).

The Tukuna know that, whether in Peru, Colombia, or Brazil, they form a homogeneous and distinct people compared with the other Indian tribes or the Neo-American nations. However, they have never had the slightest political cohesion.

A certain feeling of solidarity unites clansmen, even extending to all the clans of the same moiety. At least I noticed that, if no other considerations were involved, in any problem the Indian would automatically place himself and his sympathies on the side of the members of his clan or moiety without, however, being morally obligated to aid them.

Of the fifteen clans of moiety A, twelve have the names of trees, two the names of insects, and one the name of a mammal.

Clans of Moiety A

Clan	Related Tree or Animal	Additional Correlation
a:'ru	auahy grande (*Thevetia* sp.)	dyəl'; acutipuré, squirrel (*Sciurus* sp.)
čë^{n}vëru	auahy pequeno (?), a bird	
na'i^{n}yęę	saúva (*Atta* sp.), ant	Tessmann's "náika"
tęku	saúva (another species?)	
čiva'	seringarana, a tree	a'i (*onça pintada*), spotted jaguar, Tessmann's "áika"
në'/nl^{n}	pau mulato, a tree (sp. ?)	në'/ma suçuarana (*Felis concolor*)
čëë'	acapú, tree (*Vouacapoua* sp.)	a'iru, dog
ë	genipapo (*Genipa* sp.)	dyəl'; acutipuré, squirrel, (*Sciurus* sp.) (another sp. ?)
pu'kjrë	muirapiranga (*Brosium* sp.)	
ču^{n}a	caraná (*Mauritia carana*, Wall.)	
të'ma	burity grosso (*Mauritia* sp.)	
va'ira	açahy (*Euterpe* sp.)	
a'ičanari	genipapo do igapó, tree (sp. ?)	
kë'turë	maracajá grande (*Felis pardalis*)	
nyë'ni^{n}či	burity fino (*Mauritia* sp.)	